

A Rash of *Kaddishes*

by
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Welcome to Worship Shorts!

Today I want to talk about a Rash of *Kaddishes*. This should not be confused with a Cache of Radishes, which is a supply of small spicy tubers. A Rash of *Kaddishes* is a proliferation of different types of *Kaddish* prayers, which is exactly what we find in a typical Jewish service.

In fact there are four different types of *Kaddishes* usually found in Jewish services: the Mourner's *Kaddish* (with which we are all familiar), the Half -*Kaddish*, the Full *Kaddish*, and the Rabbi's *Kaddish*. These are all used at different places in different services, and they are primarily prayed as a way of transitioning from one part of the service to another. There is one other *Kaddish* used after a burial service, which is also used after the end of studying a tractate of the Talmud. There is also a different *Kaddish* used among the Ashkenazi people, and another used among the Sephardic people. At Ohev, we use the Sephardic version, because (1) it includes a reference to the Messiah, and (2) the Hebrew primarily spoken in Israel is Sephardic. It doesn't hurt that the Sephardic pronunciation is primarily used among Jews of a Latino origin, which would apply to a number of our members.

The central theme of the *Kaddish* prayer is the sanctification of God's name. The prayer is very old, with the oldest version being found in a *Siddur* from around 900 CE. It is only said when there are ten or more present. A woman, a Gentile, or a Jew who believes in Yeshua would not be counted in the ten for the most observant *minyans*. In our Messianic tradition, we don't usually make these exclusions. We do, however, usually observe the need to have ten people present.

There are different melodies used at different parts of the service and in different services on different days. In Sephardic congregations, everyone sits for saying *Kaddish* except for the *Kaddish* immediately after the *Amidah* where everyone stands, and for the Mourner's *Kaddish* where only those who are mourning stand. In Ashkenazi synagogues, customs vary. It is common in both Orthodox and Reform congregations for everyone to stand during *Kaddish*. In Conservative congregations, everyone usually sits. Sometimes a distinction is made between the different forms of the *Kaddish*, or each congregant sits or stands based on his or her own custom.

The Mourner's *Kaddish* is often treated differently from the other forms. Those who are standing to recite the *Kaddish* bow at various points, usually at the first word and at each *Amen* - also at *Yitbarach* and *Brich Hu*. During *Oseh Shalom*, which is the closing line for all forms of *Kaddish* except the Half *Kaddish*, congregants take three steps back and bow - first to the left, then to the right, then forward - as if leaving the presence of a King. It is customary to recite the Mourner's *Kaddish* daily for the first week upon the death of a parent, spouse, sibling, or child. Then it is said weekly for the first month, and monthly for the first year. After that, it is said annually on the *Yahrtzeit*, or anniversary of the death of the near relative. Others have added practices of saying the *Kaddish* for Holocaust victims and for other significant deaths, especially those who clearly have no child, sibling, or parent to say *Kaddish* in their remembrance.

Some Jewish groups believe that saying *Kaddish* adds merit to, and benefits the person for whom it is said. In our view, this is wrong theology, and we don't say it with any such thought.

As I said earlier, there are a Rash of *Kaddishes*, and it may seem confusing at first. But the *Kaddish* is a beautiful prayer that magnifies the name of God, is useful for transitioning in different parts of the

service, and is one that we will no doubt become more acquainted with over time. Thank you for listening to Worship Shorts.